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# THE JOURNAL OF AMERICAN FOLK-LORE

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## FOLK-SONG AND FOLK-POETRY AS FOUND IN THE SECULAR SONGS OF THE SOUTHERN NEGROES— *Concluded*

BY HOWARD W. ODUM

### 54. JOE TURNER

The "special" is a well-known term for the negro's "gun," which is usually a pistol; the "44" is always the favorite. The "coolin'-board" is the death-bed, and is a common expression used to signify that one's time is at an end; that is, when he is to be on the "coolin'-board." The negro criminal almost invariably dies at peace with God. The conception commonly found among the negroes, and one which they cultivate, is that the criminal will always be reconciled before his death. So in this case Eddy Jones dies singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." In much the same way the man who has been to the chain gang or prison is looked upon with some sort of admiration at the same time that he is feared. In "Joe Turner" an ideal is hinted at. Each line is sung three times to make a stanza.

Dey tell me Joe Turner he done come,  
Dey tell me Joe Turner he done come,  
Oh, dey tell me Joe Turner he done come.

| : Come like he ain't never come befo'. : | (*three times*)

| : Come with that fohty links o' chain. : | (*three times*)

| : Tell a me Joe Turner is my man. : | (*three times*)

### 55. CASEY JONES

A hero of less criminal intents and habits was "Casey Jones." He is the hero of the engine and train. As will be noted, the negro is fascinated by the train-song. He would like to be an engineer all his days. Negroes often discuss among themselves the possibility of their occupying positions on the trains; they take almost as much pride in being brakemen and subordinates. It is interesting to hear them boasting of what they would do in emergencies, or whether or not

they would be frightened. The song that follows gives a favorite version of the ballad.

Casey Jones was engineer,  
Told his fireman not to fear,  
All he wanted was boiler hot,  
Run in Canton 'bout four o'clock.  
  
One Sunday mornin' it wus drizzlin' rain,  
Looked down road an' saw a train,  
Fireman says, "Let's make a jump,  
Two locomotives an' dey bound to bump."  
  
Casey Jones, I know him well,  
Tole de fireman to ring de bell;  
Fireman jump an' say good-by,  
Casey Jones, you're bound to die.  
  
Went on down to de depot track,  
Beggin' my honey to take me back,  
She turn 'roun some two or three times,  
"Take you back when you learn to grind."  
  
Womens in Kansas all dressed in red,  
Got de news dat Casey was dead;  
De womens in Jackson all dressed in black,  
Said, in fact, he was a cracker-jack.

The verse about "begging his honey" is intended to give the scene after the wreck, when the fireman, who did not stay on the engine with Casey, was out of a job. "Canton" and "Jackson" are regularly sung in Mississippi, while "Memphis" is more often sung in Tennessee.

#### 56. JOSEPH MICA

Another version of the song as found in Georgia and Alabama is sung in honor of "Joseph Mica." Atlanta or Birmingham are the local places.

Joseph Mica was good engineer,  
Told his fireman not to fear,  
All he want is water'n coal,  
Poke his head out, see drivers roll.  
  
Early one mornin' look like rain,  
'Round de curve come passenger train,  
On powers lie ole Jim Jones,  
Good ole engineer, but daid an' gone.  
  
Left Atlanta hour behin',  
Tole his fireman to make up the time,  
All he want is boiler hot,  
Run in there 'bout four o'clock.

The picture of the man looking out of the locomotive window and watching the "drivers" roll is a good one. The negroes love to watch

the trains; and no more complete happiness could be imagined than to be an engineer, with nothing to do but watch the scenes and the engine.

## 57. BRADY

A more mixed scene is pictured in "Brady." Here, too, the women hear of the news, as, indeed, they always do; but this time they are glad of his death. Why this is, the song does not tell. Brady, however, must have been a pretty bad fellow, for he did not stay long in hell.

Brady went to hell, but he didn't go to stay,  
Devil say, "Brady, step 'roun' dis way,  
I'm lookin' for you mos' every day."

Brady, Brady, you know you done wrong,  
You come in when game was goin' on,  
An' dey laid po' Brady down.

Up wid de crowbar, bus' open de do',  
Lef' him lyin' dead on pool-room flo',  
An' they laid his po' body down.

Womens in Iowy dey heard de news,  
Wrote it down on ole red shoes,  
Dat dey glad po' Brady wus dead.

The scene is one of a killing in a game of poker or craps. "They laid his po' body down" is the common way of saying they killed him. The expression has been met in a number of verses previously given. Just what the conclusion of the scene with the devil was, the negro singer does not seem to know.

## 58. THE NEGRO BUM

More personal and less conspicuous are the boasts of individuals. Here the negro's wit appears again, and he refuses to be interrupted with anything serious, unless it be fear of some officer. The "Negro Bum" is the name of a short song that is a good exposition of his feelings.

I wus goin' down the railroad, hungry an' wanted to eat,  
I ask white lady for some bread an' meat,  
She giv' me bread an' coffee, an' treated me mighty kin',  
If I could git them good handouts, I'd quit work, bum all the time.

Well, the railroad completed, the cars upon the track,  
Yonder comes two dirty hobos with grip-sacks on dere backs,  
One look like my brother, the other my brother-in-law,  
They walk all the way from Mississippi to the State of Arkansas.

## 59. ONE MO' ROUNDER GONE

The term "rounder" is applied not only to men, but to women also. In general, the interpretation is that of a worthless and wandering

person, who prides himself on being idle, and thus on the acquirement of as many passing accomplishments as possible. It is also a term of fellowship. In songs that follow, the chorus "One mo' Rounder gone" will be found to express fitting sentiment to the accompanying scenes. The song by that name gives a repetition of the burial-scenes and general feeling which was caused by the death of a girl. Its unusual feature lies in the fact that the song applies to a girl.

Rubber-tired buggy, double-seated hack,  
Well, it carried po' Delia to graveyard, failed to bring her back,  
*Lawdy, one mo' rounder gone.*

Delia's mother weep, Delia's mother mourn,  
She wouldn't have taken it so hard if po' girl had died at home,  
*Well, one mo' ole rounder gone.*

Yes, some give a nickel, some give a dime,  
I didn't give nary red cent, fo' she was no friend o' mine,  
*Well, it's one mo' rounder gone.*

#### 60. EASTMAN

The negroes have appropriate names for many of their typical characters, the meaning of which is difficult to explain. "Eastman," "rounder," "creeper," and other characters, have their own peculiar characteristics. The "rounder" is more than the idle character. He becomes the meddler in the home. The "Eastman" is kept fat by the women among whom he is universally a favorite. The "creeper" watches his chance to get admittance into a home, unknown to the husband. The "Natu'al-bohn Eastman" gives a view of his opinion of himself, with adopted forms of burlesque.

I went down to New Orleans  
To buy my wife a sewin'-machine,  
The needle broke an' she couldn't sew,  
I'm a natu'al-bohn Eastman, for she tole me so.

*I'm a Eastman, how do you know?*  
*I'm a natu'al-bohn Eastman, for she tole me so.*

Well, they call me a Eastman if I walk around,  
They call me a Eastman if I leave the town,  
I got it writ on the tail o' my shirt,  
I'm a natu'al-bohn Eastman, don't have to work.

*Oh, I'm a Eastman on the road again,*  
*For I'm an Eastman on the road again.*

Wake-up, ole rounder, it's time to go,  
I think I heard dat whistle blow,  
You step out, let work-ox step in,  
You're a natu'al-bohn Eastman, you k'n come agin.

*Carry me down to the station-house do',*  
*Find nuther Eastman an' let me know.*

Wake up, ole rounder, you sleep too late,  
 Money-makin' man done pass yo' gate,  
 You step out, let money-makin' man step in,  
 You a natu'al-bohn Eastman, you can come agin.

61. BAD-LAN' STONE

The negro loves to boast of being a "bad man." "I bin a *bad man* in my day," says the older fellow to the boys about him. Much the same sentiment is here sung as that in the songs just given. He sings,—

I was bohn in a mighty bad lan',  
 For my name is Bad-Lan' Stone.  
 Well, I want all you coons fer to understan',  
 I am dangerous wid my lickier on.  
 You may bring all yo' guns from de battle-ship,  
 I make a coon climb a tree.  
 Don't you never dare to slight my repertation,  
 Or I'll break up this jamberee.  
 Well, well, I wus bohn in a mighty bad lan',  
 For my name — my name — is *Bad-Man* Stone.

62. YOU MAY LEAVE, BUT THIS WILL BRING YOU BACK

It will be seen that the negro loves to sing of trials in court, arrests, idleness, crime, and bravado. The tramp and the "rounder," the "Eastman" and the "creeper," are but typical extremes. The notorious characters sung are the objective specimens of the common spirit of self-feeling. Now comes the song with the personal boast and the reckless brag. Mixed with it all is the happy-go-lucky sense of don't-care and humor. It is a great philosophy of life the negro has.

Satisfied, tickled to death,  
 Got a bottle o' whiskey on my shelf,  
*You may leave, but this will bring you back.*  
 Satisfied, satisfied,  
 Got my honey by my side,  
*You may leave, but this will bring you back.*  
 An' I'm jus' frum the country come to town,  
 A too-loo-shaker from my head on down,  
*You may leave, but this will bring you back.*

63. THIS MORNIN', THIS EVENIN', SO SOON

What does it matter to him if he has been in serious trouble? Is not the jail about as good as home, the chain gang as good as his every-day life? He will get enough to eat and a place to sleep. The negro sings with characteristic humor "This mornin', this evenin',"

and mingles his scenes in such a way that the singer enjoys them all.  
Says he, —

- | : Went up town wid my hat in my han' dis mo'nin', : |  
     Went up town wid my hat in my han',  
     "Good mornin', jedge, done killed my man,"  
         *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*
- | : I didn't quite kill him, but I fixed him so, this mornin', : |  
     I didn't quite kill him, but I fixed him so,  
     He won't boder wid me no mo',  
         *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*
- | : All I want is my strong hand-out, this mornin', : |  
     All I want is my strong hand-out,  
     It will make me strong and stout,  
         *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*

In the same way other couplets are sung, — the first line repeated twice with "this mornin'," the third time without it, and rhymed with the second line of the couplet, after which follows the refrain "*This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*" The effect is striking.

When you kill a chicken, save me the feet,  
 When you think I'm workin', I'm walkin' the street.  
 When you kill a chicken, save me the whang,  
 When you think I'm workin', I ain't doin' a thing.  
 'Tain't no use a me workin' so,  
 'Cause I ain't goin' ter work no mo'.  
 I'm goin' back to Tennessee,  
 Where dem wimmins git stuck on me,  
     *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*

#### 64. BRER RABBIT

With the same song the negroes of the Carolinas sing some verses about Brer' Rabbit. While they are not the purely original creation of negro song, they are very appropriate, and easily please the negro's fancy. These verses consist, as above, of various repetitions, two of which follow.

- | : O Brer Rabbit! you look mighty good this mornin', : |  
     O Brer Rabbit! you look mighty good,  
     Yes, by God! you better take to de wood,  
         *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*
- | : O Brer Rabbit! yo' ears mighty long, this mornin', : |  
     O Brer Rabbit! yo' ears mighty long,  
     Yes, by God! dey's put in wrong,  
         *This mornin', this evenin', so soon.*
- | : O Brer Rabbit! yo' tail mighty white, this mornin', : |  
     O Brer Rabbit! yo' tail mighty white,  
     Yes, by God! yer better take to flight,  
         *This mornin', this evenin' so soon.*

65. EV'YBODY BIN DOWN ON ME

Doleful and gruesome verses are very much in vogue among the negroes. Repetition of such lines makes a peculiar effect. The following song, which represents another phase of the wantonness and simplicity of the negro, is sung at length. Each stanza is made to contain six lines by repeating each line of the stanza three times.

Ev'y since I lef' dat county farm,  
 Ev'ybody bin down on me.  
 I killed a man, killed a man,  
 Nobody to pay my fine.  
 I went on down to de railroad,  
 Could not find a frien'.  
 When I git up de road,  
 Wonder who'll pay my fine!  
 Long as I make my nine a week,  
 'Round yo' bedside I goin' to creep.

66. NOBODY'S BIZNESS BUT MINE

Repeated much in the same way is the song "Nobody's Bizness but Mine." The sentiment is somewhat similar to the song "'Tain't Nobody's Bizness but my Own," but is more careless and care-free. The chorus is repeated after each stanza or omitted at will.

| : *Georgia Luke, how do you do?*  
*Do lak' I use ter, God knows!* : |  
 | : *Do lak' I use ter, God knows!* : |

And in the stanzas the first two lines are sung, with the second or the chorus line repeated four times, or the second sung once with the chorus line three times, either of which makes a good impression.

Goin' to my shack,  
 Ain't comin' back,  
 | : Nobody's bizness but mine, : | (*four times*)  
 Git upon my bunk,  
 Look into my trunk,  
 Count my silver an' my gold.  
 If you don't believe I'm fine,  
 Git me behin' a pine,  
 Treat you lak' a lady, God knows!  
 Goin' back up North,  
 Goin' pull my britches off,  
 Goin' sleep in my long shirt-tail.  
 Goin' to my shack,  
 Goin' have hump on my back,  
 Nobody's bizness but mine.



Goin' be hump on my back —  
 So many chickens in de sack,  
 Nobody's bizness but mine.

Chickens in my sack —  
 Big hounds on my track,  
 Nobody's bizness but mine.

Hounds on my track, boys,  
 Never did look back,  
 Nobody's bizness but mine.

#### 67. I'M GOIN' BACK

The above song perhaps reaches a climax of the happy and careless disposition of the vaudeville negro. Such pictures as he paints there, he sees vividly, and enjoys them. There are many other verses which are sung to the song, but which will not permit reproducing. In much the same spirit, but with perhaps a little more recklessness, the negro man sings,—

My name is Uncle Sam,  
 An' I do not give a damn,  
 I takes a little toddy now an' then,  
*I'm goin' back.*

Well, some folks do say  
 Dat it is not a sin  
 If I takes a little toddy now an' then,  
*I goin' back.*

I was born in sweet ole Alabam',  
 An' I do not give a damn,  
 Where I takes a little toddy now an' then,  
*Well, I'm goin' back.*

#### 68. DAT FORTUNE-TELLER MAN

Again he sings of his prowess. This time he is the "fortune-teller man," which term has a hidden meaning, to which the other verses are adapted.

I'm dat fortune-teller man,  
 Can read yo' future by lookin' in yo' han',  
 Can tell yo' fortune by lookin' in yo' han',  
 Oh, I'm dat fortune-teller man.

#### 69. COCAINE HABIT

The negro singer pays his respects to the cocaine habit and whiskey. The majority of these songs are indecent in their suggestion. An example of the better verses will illustrate.

Well, the cocaine habit is might' bad,  
 It kill ev'ybody I know it to have had,  
*O my babe!*

Well, I wake in de mornin' by the city-clock bell,  
An' the niggers up town givin' cocaine hell,  
*O my babe, O my babe!*

I went to the drug-store, I went in a lope,  
Sign on the door, "There's no mo' coke,"  
*O my babe, O my babe, O my babe!*

70. ROLLIN'-MILL

So in the "Rollin'-Mill" the singer says there's no more iron to ship to town. Sometimes he means he won't have to work because the material is exhausted, sometimes he means there will be no more chains for him, but it is most likely that he symbolizes liquor by the iron. He sings of local whiskey-houses in the same manner, and urges getting a full supply.

*Rollin'-mill done shut down,  
Ain't shippin' no mo' iron to town.*

If you don't believe Jumbagot's dead,  
Jus' look at crepe on 'Liza's head,  
*O babe, O babe!*

Carried him off in hoo-doo wagon,  
Brought him back wid his feet a-draggin',  
*O babe, O babe!*

Carried him off on smoky road,  
Brought him back on his coolin'-board,  
*O babe, O babe!*

Well, cocaine womens oughter be like me,  
Drink corn whiskey, let cocaine be,  
*O babe, O babe!*

If you don't believe I'm right,  
Let me come to see you jus' one night,  
*O babe, O my babe!*

Murder, conviction, courts, and fines are thus seen to be common themes along with the general results that would be expected to follow the use of whiskey and weapons; and just as the knife, razor, and "special" are common companions with the negro, and indicate much of his criminal nature, so his songs boast of crimes which he thinks of and sometimes commits. But the negro is often a coward, and loves to boast of things he is *going to do*. The fellow who sang of asking everybody if the bully boy had been that way, was pretty certain that he had not; and the appearance of the bully would have meant a hasty retreat of the pursuer. He boasts of his brave acts and "strong nerve." However, this boasting attitude itself leads to actual crime. The negro who places himself in such a position often is compelled to commit the crime; he often fights because he has an advan-

tage, and makes a suitable occasion to give vent to his feelings. This tendency has been noted in many of his songs. He says, "Well, I goin' to kill you, but dat's all right," and sings, —

I tell you once, an' I tell you twice,  
Nex' time I tell you, gwine take yo' life.

So he laughs at his predicament when he is out of it:

Went up town one Friday night,  
Went to kill a kid,  
Reach my han' in my pocket,  
Nothin' to kill him wid.

#### 71. JULIA WATERS

In the same mood he tells of his escape from the county gang while he was supposed to be working in the rocks. His song is almost as varied as his experiences. He sings in a monotone-like chant.

O Julia Waters! do you remember the day,  
When we wus drivin' steel in ole rock quarry,  
I tried to git away?

Round de mountain I went skippin';  
Thru' de weeds I went flyin',  
Out-run lightening fas' mail on Georgia line.

Well, I walked up to conductor for to give him game o' talk,  
"If you got money or ticket, I take you to New York;  
If you have no money or ticket" —

"Pity me, sir, for I am po',  
Yonder come brakeman on outside,  
Goin' shut up box-car do'."

I was boun' down to Louisville,  
Got stuck on Louisville girl,  
You bet yo' life she's out o' sight,  
She wore the Louisville curl.

#### 72. THOUGHT I HEARD THAT K.C. WHISTLE BLOW

Much has already been said of the negro's attitude toward the railroad and train. His songs abound in references to the train as an agent for his desires. From "ridin' the rods" to a long-desired trip back to see his sweetheart, the negro is the frequent patron of the train. Some years ago the agents for some of the Western business concerns offered attractive inducements to the negroes to migrate for permanent work. These agents went throughout the South, securing large numbers of laborers. Many a family disposed of their goods for a trifle in order to accept the flattering terms offered, for they thought that in the new environment they would soon become wealthy and prosperous.

The history of their experience is well known. They were carried out, given poor treatment, with no money and often not enough to eat. It is needless to say that all who could obtain the money, and escape, came back to their old homes. Some of the most interesting and pathetic stories told by the negroes are those of adventure and privation incurred in their effort to return home. Many of them are humorous. The following song represents one of these laborers, a man or a woman, waiting at the station for the train to carry her back "where she come from." The song is pathetic in its appeal. Each line is repeated three times; or, if the stanza consists of a rhyming couplet, the first is repeated twice with the second once. The woman waits.

| : Thought I heard that K.C. whistle blow, : |  
Oh, I thought I heard that K.C. whistle blow!

| : Blow lak' she never blow befo', : |  
Lawd, she blow lak' she never blow befo'.

| : Wish to God some ole train would run, : |  
Carry me back where I come from.

| : Out in the wide worl' alone. : |

| : Take me back to sweet ole Birmingham. : |

| : Baby-honey, come an' go with me. : |

| : Ev'ybody down on us. : |

(*Whistle blows*)

| : Thought I heard whistle when it blow, : |  
Blow lak' she ain't goin' blow no mo'.

(*Train has come, now moves away*)

| : Good by, baby, call it gone. : |

| : Fireman, put in a little mo' coal. : |

| : Fireman, well, we're livin' high. : |

| : Yonder comes that easy-goin' man o' mine. : |

Ain't no use you tryin' send me roun',  
I got 'nuf money to pay my fine.

Out in this wide worl' to roam,  
Ain't got no place to call my home.

73. K. C.

Still another version of the song represents a lone laborer working near the railroad, and watching the trains go by. He has not the money, nor can he get away, but he longs to go home. As he works, he pictures these scenes; imagines himself on board the train, and happy in going back to the "sunny South, where sun shines on his

baby's house." Or as a train comes from his home, he imagines that some of his friends have come to see him. He sings, —

Well, I thought I heard that K.C. whistle blow,  
Blow lak' she never blow befo'.

I believe my woman's on that train,  
O babe! I b'lieve my woman's on that train.

She comin' back from sweet ole Alabam',  
She comin' to see her lovin' man.

Fireman, put in a little mo' coal,  
Run dat train in some lonesome hole.

#### 74. L. & N.

A song of the same origin, and very much like the "K. C.," is another called "L. & N." Instead of "L. & N.," other roads may be designated. This negro man labors with the hope that he will soon go home again. By "home" he means the community where he knows the most people. It is a song of the wanderer, and repeats much the same sentiment as that found in many of the songs under that class. This song and the one just given are sung to the "Frisco Rag-Time" music or train-song. The train is heard running; the wheels distinctly roar as they cross the joints of rail; the whistle blows between each verse, and the bell rings anon for the crossing. A more vivid picture than this is not portrayed with the aid of words and music. The negro sees, and sees vividly, every scene here portrayed. Indeed, one forgets himself, and unconsciously visualizes the train with its passengers. The song with the music is described elsewhere. The lonely laborer sings, —

Just as sho' as train run thru' L. & N. yard,  
I'm boun' do go home if I have to ride de rod.

So good-by, little girl! I'm scared to call yo' name;  
Good-by, little girl! I'm scared to call yo' name.

Now, my mamma's dead, an' my sweet ole popper, too,  
An' I got no one fer to carry my trouble to.

An' if I wus to die, little girl, so far 'way from home,  
The folks, honey, for miles 'round would mourn.

Now, kiss yo' man, an' tell yo' man good-by;  
Please kiss yo' man, an' tell yo' man good-by!

I'm goin' tell my mommer, whenever I git home,  
How people treated me way off from home.

#### 75. KNIFE-SONG

Very much like the railroad-song is the knife-song, which has also been described previously. Sometimes the two are combined; and

with the blowing of the whistle, the ringing of the bell, and the "talkin'" of the knife as it goes back and forth over the strings, the "music physicianer" has a wonderful production. Many songs are sung to this music. One version of the well-known knife-song has been given. Another, which is sung more generally in the Southern States, follows. The verses consist of either a single line repeated, or a rhyming couplet. Two lines are sung in harmony with the running of the knife over the strings of the negro's guitar; while the refrain, "*Lawd, lawd, lawd!*" wherever found, is sung to the "talking" of the knife. The other two lines are sung to the picking of the guitar, as in ordinary cases. The sentiment of the song is much the same as that in those of the first two divisions, — the wanderer and his love-affairs. The stanzas given in full repetition will illustrate the song. The lines sung with the knife are italicized; other verses are then given in their simple form.

'Fo' long, honey, 'fo' long, honey,  
'Fo' long, honey, 'fo' long, honey,  
    *Law-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*  
'Fo' long, honey, 'fo' long, honey,  
'Fo' long, honey, 'fo' long, honey,  
    *L-a-w-d, la-w-d, la-w-d!*

*Don't never git one woman on yo' min',  
Keep you in trouble all yo' time,  
    L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*  
Don't never git one woman on yo' min',  
Keep you in trouble all yo' time,  
    *L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*

In the same manner the song continues, couplets being sung like the one just given. They give a general review of negro life as seen in his songs. He sings,—

Don't never let yo' baby have her way,  
Keep you in trouble all yo' day,  
    *L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*  
  
Don't never take one woman for yo' frien',  
When you out 'nuther man in,  
    *L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*  
  
I hate to hear my honey call my name,  
Call me so lonesome an' so sad.  
    Etc.  
  
I got de blues an' can't be satisfied,  
Brown-skin woman cause of it all.  
    Etc.  
  
That woman will be the death o' me,  
Some girl will be the death o' me.  
    Etc.

Honey, come an' go with me,  
 When I'm gone what yer gwine ter say?  
 Etc.

Sung like the first stanza given, are many "one-verse" songs. Nor are they less attractive. The insertion of the chorus line takes away any monotony; besides, the knife adds zest.

I'm goin' 'way, won't be long,  
 I'm goin' 'way, won't be long,  
*L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*

Went up town to give my troubles away,  
 Went up town to give my troubles away,  
*L-a-w-d, l-a-w-d, l-a-w-d!*

| : Too good a man to be slighted down. : |  
 | : Slide me down—I'll slow-slide up agin. : |  
 | : Baby, you always on my min'. : |  
 | : The girl I love's the girl I crave to see. : |  
 | : Baby, do you ever think of me? : |  
 | : Baby, what have I done to you? : |  
 | : Wonder whar' my honey stay las' night! : |  
 | : Got a baby, don't care wher' she goes. : |  
 | : I goin' pack my grip — git further down de road. : |  
 | : Gwine to leave if I haf' ter ride de rod. : |  
 | : Ridin' de rod ain't no easy job. : |

#### 76. BREAK-DOWN SONG

The "break-down" or dancing songs have been described in relation to their repetition and use. The instrument is more incentive to the dance than the song, but would be far less effective without the singing. These examples give an insight, again, into the simple life of the negro. It is one of his happy traits to combine his entertainment with scenes appropriate to the occasion; however, his themes are often very irrelevant *per se*.

| : Give me a little buttermilk, ma'am, : | (*three times*)  
 Please give me a little buttermilk, ma'am.  
 | : Ain't had none so long, so long, : | (*three times*)  
 Oh, I ain't had none so long!

The repetition not only is not unpleasant, but adds whatever of charm there is to the line. The singer continues, —

| : Cows in de bottom done gone dry : |  
 | : Sister got so she won't churn. : |  
 Goin' to tell auntie fo' long. : |

77. GREASY GREENS

But buttermilk is not more attractive than "greasy greens." In this remarkable song the negroes dance with merriment, each final line being suitable to the "s-w-i-n-g c-o-r-n-e-r" of the dance. The picture, while not exactly elegant, is at least a strong one.

Mamma goin' to cook some,  
Mamma goin' to cook some,  
Mamma goin' to cook some —  
*Greasy greens.*

How I love them,  
How I love them,  
How I love them —  
*Greasy greens.*

| : Mamma goin' ter boil them — : | (*three times*)  
*Greasy greens.*

| : Sister goin' pick them — : | (*three times*)  
*Greasy greens.*

| : I goin' eat them — : | (*three times*)  
*Greasy greens.*

78. LOST JOHN

Still others are composed of single lines repeated without variation. The single song often has only three or four verses; these are repeated as long as that particular song is wanted for the dance. Another will then be taken up. The negroes enjoy variety.

Lost John, lost John, lost John,  
Lost John, lost John, lost John,  
Lost John, lost John, lost John,  
Help me to look for lost John.

Lost John done gone away,  
Help me to look for lost John.

Still I ain't bother yet,  
Still I ain't bother none.

Sun is goin' down,  
Sun is goin' down.

I goin' 'way some day.  
Yes, I goin' way some day.

I'm goin' 'way to stay,  
Still I'm goin' 'way to stay.

Come an' go with me —  
Oh, yes! come an' go with me.

I got a honey here,  
Yes, I got a honey here.

Goin' away to leave you,  
Well, I goin' 'way to leave you



## 79. AIN'T YOU SORRY

With more humor than those just given the negro sings the following verses. Sorry for what? Anything.

Ain't you sorry,  
 Ain't you sorry,  
 Ain't you sorry,  
 Ain't you sorry, sorry-y?

| : Let us marry, marry, : | (*three times*)  
 Let us marry Miss Carrie.

Marry Miss Carrie — (*as above*)  
 Yes, marry, marry Miss Carrie.

## 80. LILLY

The next song gives much insight into negro life, at the same time that it gives the negro's interpretation of the scenes. In the song that follows, the varied events from the home to the grave are told; and here is found again a review and summary of the negro's social life. The song, sometimes called respectively "Pauly," "Frankie," "Lilly," is the story of the murder committed, and of the conviction of the murderess. The pathos is typical, and re-echoes the sentiment of other negro songs. The scene is Atlanta, one singer says; another says Memphis. The reader will recognize verses common to negro songs in general. The combination and scene make a new setting. The song is an unusually strong portrayal of negro life and thought.

Lilly was a good girl — ev'ybody knows,  
 Spent a hundred dollars to buy her father suit o' clothes,  
*Her man certainly got to treat her right.*

She went to Bell Street — bought a bottle of beer;  
 "Good-mornin', bar-keeper, has my lovin' man been here?" —  
*My man certainly got to treat me right.*

It is Sunday an' I ain't goin' to tell you no lie,  
 He wus standin' over there jus' an hour ago,  
*My man certainly got to treat me right.*

She went down to First Avenue, to pawn-broker.  
 "Good-mornin', kind lady, what will you have?" —  
 "I want to git a fohty-fo' gun, for  
*All I got's done gone."*

He say to the lady, "It's against my law  
 To rent any woman '44' smokin' gun,  
*For all you got'll be daid an' gone."*

She went to the alley, — dogs begin to bark, —  
 Saw her lovin' man standin' in de dark,  
*Laid his po' body down.*

"Turn me over Lilly, turn me over slow,  
May be las' time, I don't know,  
*All you got's daid an' gone.*"

She sent for the doctors — doctors all did come;  
Sometimes they walk, sometimes they run;  
*An' it's one mo' rounder gone.*

They picked up Pauly, carried him to infirmiary,  
He told the doctors he a's a gamblin' man,  
*An' it's one mo' rounder gone.*

Newsboys come runnin' — to tell de mother de news.  
She said to the lads, "That can't be true,  
I seed my son 'bout an hour ago."

Come here, John, an' git yo' hat;  
Go down the street an' see where my son is at,  
*Is he gone, is he gone?*

The policemen all dressed in blue,  
Dey come down de street by two an' two,  
*One mo' rounder gone.*

Lucy, git yo' bonnet! Johnnie, git yo' hat!  
Go down on Bell Street an' see where my son is at,  
*Is he gone, is he gone?*

Sunday she got 'rested, Tuesday she was fined,  
Wednesday she pleaded for all-life trial,  
*An' it's all she's got done gone.*

Lilly said to jailer, "How can it be?  
Feed all prisoners, won't feed me.  
*Lawd, have mercy on yo' soul!"*

Jailer said to Lilly, "I tell you what to do, —  
Go back in yo' dark cell an' take a good sleep!"  
*An' it's all she's got done gone.*

She said to the jailer, "How can I sleep?  
All 'round my bedside lovin' Paul do creep,  
*It's all I got's gone.*"

The wimmins in Atlanta, dey heard de news,  
Run excursion with new red shoes,  
*An' it's one mo' rounder gone.*

Some give a nickel, some give a dime,  
Some didn't give nary red copper cent,  
*An' it's one mo' rounder gone.*

Well, it's fohty-dollar hearse an' rubber-tire hack,  
Carry po' Paul to cemetary, but fail to bring him back,  
*An' it's one mo' rounder gone.*

Well, they pick up Pauly, an' laid him to rest;  
Preacher said de ceremony, sayin',  
*"Well, it's all dat you got's daid an' gone."*

## 81. BABY LET THE DEAL GO DOWN

The negro has portrayed some pictures of his adventures in crime and rowdyism. He has told of shooting and killing, of his arrests and conviction, and of his day in jail. The judges and jury make permanent impressions upon him. He is yet to tell something of his gambling pleasures. The negro's propensities for "shootin' craps" and gambling in general are well known. He boasts of his good and bad luck. In "Let the Deal go Down" he gives a characteristic picture:

| : *Baby, let the deal go down* : | (*three times*)

I gamble all over Kentucky,  
Part of Georgia, too,  
Everywhere I hang my hat,  
Home, sweet home, to me.

I lose my watch an' lose my chain,  
Lose ev'y thing but my diamon' ring. —  
Come here, all you Birmingham scouts!  
Set down yo' money on Number Six.

When I left Kansas City, Missouri, had three hundred dollars;  
Soon as I struck Birmingham, put cup on me.

## 82. GET THAT MONEY

The song continues in a monotone, the singer often chanting the words to the accompaniment of the guitar. The concrete suggestion makes the song more fascinating to the negro. The negro woman talks to her "man," and tells him to go and get the money from that "nigger up-stairs." He asks her what he must do if the fellow offers trouble. To be sure of his safety, she asks him the same question; and when assured, she tells him to go and get the money, she will then give him the "slip." This song also reflects the vaudeville adaptation.

Nigger up-stairs got hundred dollars:  
Some matches lyin' on mantelpiece,  
Lamp standin' right side of 'em,  
Now I want you to be sho' an' git dat money.

When you git dat money,  
I'll be down in big skin game,  
Baby, let the deal go down.

"Suppose dat nigger start sumpin'?"

"I got my pistol in my right pocket."

"Be sho' an' git dat money; an' when you git it, give me the wink,  
Baby, let the deal go down."

Ev'y since I bin a gam'lin' man,  
I bin a skippin' an' a-dodgin' in the lan'.

## 83. ODD-FELLOWS HALL

Says a negro, "I went up to Odd-Fellows Hall — Cards and dices scattered all over flo'"; and if he had a good time, perhaps he does not mind a little fight or losing his money. Odd-Fellows Hall, in most communities, is a general meeting-place. So it happens often that informal meetings like the one here mentioned are held. The "brago" spirit is here seen again in the burlesque —

I went up to Odd-Fellows Hall,  
 Had a good time, dat was all:  
 Hats an' cuffs all lyin' on de flo',  
 I bet six bits — all I had —  
 Nigger bet seven — made me mad.  
 To dat coon I could not help but say, —  
 "Git off my money — don't you hit my honey —  
 'Cause I'm a nigger — don't cuts no figger —  
 I'm gamblin' for my Sady — she's a lady —  
 I'm a hustlin' coon, that's what I am."

## 84. I GOT MINE

A version of the popular song "I got Mine" has been arranged and adapted, and is sung with hilarity.

I got mine, boys, I got mine;  
 Some o' them got six long months;  
 Some o' them paid their fine;  
 With balls and chains all 'round my legs,  
*I got mine.*

I went down to a nigger crap game,  
 Really was against my will;  
 Lose ev'thing I had but bran new dollar bill.  
 Well, a five-dollar bet was lyin' on de flo',  
 An' the nigger's point was nine,  
 When the cops come in —  
*Well, I got mine.*

When they brought them chains 'round,  
 How them niggers' eyes did shine —  
 With balls and chains all 'round their legs —  
*Like I got mine.*

## 85. GAMBLIN' STORY

Very much like the above is a scene given in a colloquy which may have been between two negroes, but more likely between four. They are playing a game; and, being in constant fear of being apprehended, they hear sounds that do not exist. They picture it with humor.

Quit, stop, I say! Don't you hear?  
 Some one's at that do'.  
 O Lord, have mercy! They've got us at las'.  
 Why don't you niggers stop all that fuss?  
 If you wusn't shootin' craps, they'd think so —  
 Now you done giv' ev'ything away.  
 Why don't you open that do'?  
 Well, if you want it open, yo'd better  
 Come an' open it yo'self.  
 Say, you niggers, you better stop jumpin' out.  
 Guess I better go out that window myself —  
 An' there was nobody at the door.

## 86. YOU SHALL BE FREE

No one appreciates more than himself the ridiculous predicaments in which the negro often gets. His wit is quick, his repartee is effective. He makes funny puns, and sings of remarkable scenes in which a negro takes part. His pictures are extremes, his sentiment trifling, his rhymes fastidious. What a description he gives of the negro and his environment, mingled with absurdities, in the following song!

Nigger be a nigger, whatever he do:  
 Tie red ribbon 'round toe of his shoe,  
 Jerk his vest on over his coat,  
 Snatch his britches up 'round his throat,  
*Singin' high-stepper, Lawd, you shall be free.*

Great big nigger, settin' on log,  
 One eye on trigger, one eye on hog,  
 Gun said "blop!" hog said "sip!"  
 An' he jumped on de hog wid all his grip,  
*Singin' high-stepper, Lawd, you shall be free.*

*Shout to glory, Lawd, you shall be free,  
 Shout to glory, Lord, you shall be free,  
 Shout, mourner, Lord, you shall be free,  
 Shout when de good Lord set you free!*

I went down to hog-eye town,  
 Dey sot me down to table;  
 I et so much dat hog-eye grease,  
 Till de grease run out my nabel.  
 Run 'long home, Miss Hog-eye,  
*Singin' high-stepper, Lord, you shall be free.*

Nigger an' rooster had a fight,  
 Rooster knowk nigger clean out o' sight,  
 Nigger say, "Rooster, dat's all right,  
 Meet you at hen-house do' to-morrow night,  
*Singin', high-stepper, Lord, you shall be free."*

Two barrels apples, three barrels cheese,  
When I git to heaven, goin' shout on my knees,  
Shout to glory, Lord, you shall be free,  
Shout to glory, mourner, you shall be free.

With the crokus sack you shall be free,  
With the crokus sack you shall be free,  
Shout to glory, Lord, you shall be free,  
*When de good Lord set you free!*

A nigger went up town actin' a hoss,  
De jedge he found him ten an' cost,  
Shout, mourner, you shall be free,  
*When de good Lord shall set you free!*

87. PANS O' BISCUIT

Here is another delightful picture which he paints of himself. It is perhaps much simpler than the one just given, which was originally adapted from a religious song, "Mourner, you shall be Free." For simplicity and exuberance of expression combined, one ought to see a crowd of small negroes singing the following verses. With mouths open and teeth shining, bodies swaying, they make a most incomparable scene.

Settin' in de wily woods —  
Settin' on a seven —  
Throwed 'im in a feather bed —  
Swore he'd gone to heaven.

*Pans o' biscuit, bowls o' gravy,  
Slice-pertater pie  
Kill a nigger dead.*

Had a sweet pertater  
Roastin' in de san',  
Saw my mother comin' —  
How I burnt my hand!

88. WHEN THE BAND BEGINS TO PLAY

Much has been said of the negro's love of music. It is needless to repeat that a musical band in the community is enough to thoroughly "demoralize" every negro within hearing distance. The song "When the Band begins to Play" shows much of the complexity of feeling possible. Here, again, the negro is at his best in clownish portrayal of unusual scenes. His memory carries him back; his feeling idealizes the present. The chorus, always sung after each stanza, serves to unify the song; while the two-line refrain gives hilarity to the singing.

| : *When de ban' begins to play*, : | (*three times as chorus*)

See dat mule a-comin', ain't got half a load,  
If you think he unruly mule, give him all de road,

*Whoa, mule, whoa! Whoa dere, I say!*  
*Keep yo' seat, Miss 'Liza Jane! Hold on to the sleigh!*  
 Musketer fly high, musketer fly low;  
 If I git my foot on him, he won't fly no mo';  
*Well, it's whoa, mule, whoa! Whoa dere, I say!*  
*Keep yo' seat, Miss Liza Jane! Hold on to the sleigh!*  
 Had ole banjo one time, strings made out o' twine;  
 All song I could sing was "Wish dat Gal was Mine!"  
*An' it's whoa, mule, whoa! Whoa dere, I say, etc.*

Sung like the above, each of the following stanzas of two long lines, but sung with emphasis and pause as if four short lines, is followed by the two lines as refrain, "*whoa, mule,*" etc., with the original chorus, "*When the band begins to play,*" following each stanza. This, too, is the negro's vaudeville song:

If you want to see dat mule kick,  
 If you want to hear him hollar,  
 Tie a knot in his tail,  
 An' poke his head through a collar,  
 Den you kin hollow, "Whoa, mule," etc.  
 Went runnin' down to turkey-roost,  
 Fell down on his knees,  
 Liked to kill'd hisself laughin',  
 'Cause he heard a turkey sneeze.  
 Ole Massa bought a yaller gal,  
 Brought her from de South;  
 He wrapped her hair so mazen tight,  
 She could not shut her mouth.  
 He taken her down to blacksmith shop,  
 To have her mouth cut smaller,  
 She made a whoop, she made a squall,  
 Den swallowed shop an' all.  
 On Sat'day night he stole a sheep,  
 On Sunday he was taken,  
 Monday was his trial day,  
 Tuesday he hung like bac'n.  
 Keep yo' seat, Miss Liza Jane!  
 Don't act jes' lak a fool.  
 Ain't got time to kiss you,  
 'Cause I'm tendin' to dis mule.  
 Ole marster he raise a cow,  
 He knowed de day when she wus bohn,  
 Hit took a jay-bird seventeen years  
 To fly from ho'n to ho'n.  
 Ole marster raised ole gray mule,  
 He knowed de day he wus born,  
 Ev'y tooth in his head  
 Would hold a barrel o' corn.

Ole master had little ole mule,  
 Name was Simon Slick,  
 Dey tied a knot in his tail,  
 Oh, how dat thing did kick!

Ole Mistus raised a little black hen,  
 Black as any crow;  
 She laid three eggs ev'y day,  
 On Sunday she laid fo'.

*An' it's whoa, mule, whoa! Whoa dere, I say!  
 Keep yo' seat, Miss Liza Jane! Hold on to the sleigh,  
 When de ban' begins to play.*

89. "ONE-VERSE" SONGS

What has been called the "one-verse" song was described in the previous section. These songs are practically without number. Parts of every song known by the negro may be sung line by line, or a single line that is especially pleasing may be sung for an hour at a time. Further examples, other than those already given, will illustrate the complexity of the subjects and the irregularity of the metres. Fragments of song are always interesting; and one wonders to which song, if to any, they originally belonged, or how they may ultimately be combined.

Carried my woman to the world's fair;  
 Would a won a fortune, but she had bad hair.

I goin' to ride that Cincinnati Southern 'fore long, little girl.  
 If I miss you, God intended it, Baby mine.

How in worl' can I miss you,  
 When I'm good dead, Amy, true girl?

Up on the hillside to see who I could see;  
 There was no boat runnin' but the "Cherokee," little girl,

An' she won't go.

Time ain't long like use to be.

I'm on my way, babe, I'm comin' home.

Shame on you, can't treat me right.

Don't you love no other coon.

Baby, won't you hold my head,  
 While I go to bed.

I bin' in the bin so long,  
 With rough an' rowdy men.

Goin' whar' ain't never bin befo'.

My woman did sumpin' never did befo'.

Swear, by God, never goin' dere no mo'.



Creeper, won't you step in?  
 Ain't goin' to rain no mo'.  
 Goin' whar de sun don't never shine.  
 Goin' whar chily' win' don't blow.  
 Goin' whar de water drink like wine,  
 Watermelon smilin' on de vine.  
 Chicken don't roos' too high for me.

## 90. SHE ROLL DEM TWO WHITE EYES

As in the religious songs of the negro, so in his social folk-songs, he quickly adapts new songs to his own environment. Mention has been made of the negro's fondness for the new and popular coon-songs; but these songs often lose their original words, and take on words of negro origin. The music does not change so much as in the case of the spirituals. The song itself often becomes amusing because of its paraphrases. "Goo-goo Eyes" was sung much among the negroes, as among the whites. The negroes have improvised more than a score of verses, some of which may be given.

Nex' day when show wus gone,  
 His baby threw him down;  
 She say to him, "I'll have you inched  
 If you lay 'round dis town.  
*Now, let me tell my tale of woe.*

"Well, de fust time I seed my brother-in-law,  
 He had some chickens for sale;  
 De nex' time I seed my brother-in-law,  
 He wus laid up in Collin's jail.  
*Den he rolled dem two white eyes."*

*Jus' because he had them thirty days,  
 He thought he had to lay in jail de res' of his days,  
 He's de bes' dey is, an' dey need him in dey biz,  
 Well, jes' because he had them thirty days.*

Of all de beastes in de woods,  
 I'd rather be a tick;  
 I'd climb up 'roun' my true love's neck,  
 An' there I'd stick,  
*Jes' to see her roll dem snow-white eyes.*

Let me tell you 'bout a cheap sport —  
 Was on a Sunday morn,  
 Put five cents in missionary box,  
 Took out fo' cents for change,  
*Well, won't he cheap! well, won't he cheap!*

Well, I would not marry black gal;  
 Tell you de reason why;  
 Ev'y time she comb her head,  
 She make dem goo-goo eyes;  
*Well, she roll dem two white eyes.*

91. HONEY, TAKE A ONE ON ME (*second version*)

Another version of "Honey, take a One on Me" differs from the one already given, being more like the original; but the ordinary person would scarcely recognize the verse that the negroes sing.

A yellow girl I do despise,  
 But a jut black girl I can't denies,  
*O honey! take a whiff on me.*  
 A jut black nigger, jus' black as tar,  
 Tryin' to git to heaven on eligater car,  
*O honey! take a whiff on me.*  
 Hattie don't love me, Esther do,  
 Because I wear my Sunday clothes,  
*Honey, take a whiff on me.*

92. DON'T YOU HEAR THEM BELLS A-RINGIN'?

A probable variation of "In the Evening by the Moonlight" is scarcely recognizable. The song is thoroughly mixed with the old spiritual; the result is a song without individuality.

Don't you hear them bells a-ringin'?  
 How sweet, I do declare!  
 Don't you hear them darkies singin',  
 Climbin' up the golden stairs?  
 Oh, Peter was so wicked,  
 Climbin' up the golden stairs,  
 When I asked him for a ticket,  
 Climbin' up the golden stairs.  
 If you think he is a fool,  
 Climbin' up the golden stairs,  
 He will treat you mighty rude,  
 Climbin' up the golden stairs.

93. CARVE 'IM TO DE HEART

For a long time the 'possum and the 'tater, the chicken and the watermelon, have been considered the requisites of the negro's happiness. He himself admits that this would make a good heaven. Formerly he sung of two seasons when "the good Lord fed the nigger;" namely, in blackberry time and when the watermelons were ripe. He is much the same to-day, and the 'possum is still proverbial. "Carve

dat 'Possum " smacks with good times for the negro. His recipe is quite appetizing. This is a well-known song, and much quoted.<sup>1</sup>

Well, 'possum meat's so nice an' sweet,

*Carve 'im to de heart;*

You'll always find hit good ter eat,

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

*Carve dat 'possum,*

*Carve dat 'possum, chillun,*

*Carve dat 'possum,*

*Oh, carve 'im to de heart.*

My ole dog treed, I went to see,

*Carve 'im to de heart;*

Dar wus a 'possum in dat tree,

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

I went up dar to fetch 'im down,

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

I bus' 'im open agin de groun,

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

De way ter cook de 'possum nice,

*Carve 'im to de heart;*

Fust parbile 'im, stir 'im twice,

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

Den lay sweet 'taters in de pan,

*Carve 'im to de heart;*

Nuthin' beats dat in de lan',

*Carve 'im to de heart.*

#### 94. CROSS-EYED SALLIE

The negro's ready wit and marked propensities for making song have been noted. Songs thus composed, and sung in whatever manner the occasion demands, give the negro a wide range of song service. His tendency to put everything into song is well illustrated in the following monotone song. One would scarcely believe this to be a song. The negro appeared to be making it as he sang, all the while picking his guitar in the regular way; but he repeated the song in the exact words except for the usual variation of dialect. This he could do as often as required. The song is one of many stories which the negroes devise to tell of their adventures. It tells of varied life and custom; it hints at undercurrents of negro thought; it tells again of woman in her relations to man; it gives splendid insight into negro characteristics in the rôle of the clown, who has mixed his thoughts, wits, bits of song and burlesque, with the crude jokes he has heard. The rendering of the song is perhaps its chief value.

<sup>1</sup> This song is sung with as much zest and enjoyment by the negro girls in a Pennsylvania institution of correction as by the darkies of southern Mississippi.

Had ole gal one time, name was Cross-eyed Sally,

She was the blackest girl in Paradise Alley.—

She had liver lips an' kidney feet. — Didn't know she was so black till I took a fire-coal one mornin' an' made a white mark on her face. — An' I didn't know she was so cross-eyed till one mornin' she come up to me an' say, "Look here, boy, I want to eat!" — I tole her if she had anything, she had better go to eatin' it — I never had nuthin'. — It hurt my girl so bad when I tole her this, that she cried; an' in cryin' she so cross-eyed till the tears run down her back. — Thought I felt sorry for my girl an' I taken her up to ole massa's home dat day — an' we seen a heap o' chickens — all sorts an' all sizes — an' I tole her to hold quiet till dat night when we go up an' see what we could do to dem chickens. — So we looked all 'round de house, an' we couldn't find nuthin'. — We looked in de trees an' yard, an' couldn't find nuthin'. — We looked in hen-house, wher' chickens oughter bin, an' never found nuthin'. — We looked under de house, an' couldn't find nuthin'. — So my girl got oneasy — thought dere was no chickens 'round dere. — Long 'bout 'leven or twelve o'clock dat night, I heard ole rooster crow in hollow back of de hen-house. — I says, "Look here, girl! Dey's chickens here." — He couldn't set up an' not crow for midnight nor mornin' neither: so me'n her goes down, an' chickens wus settin' way up in cedar-tree. — She say to me, "How in worl' you goin' git dem chickens out'n dat high tree?" I tole her I can clam jes' good as they can fly — I can clam jes' as good as they can fly. — So up de tree I went like anything else wid sharp claws — cat or squirrel — clam jes' fas' as please. — So I seen all sorts o' chickens, — boot-legs, Shanghais, Plymouth Rock, — an' found some ole freezlin'. — She say to me, "I doan know how in de worl' de freezlin git up dere." An' I say, "Nor me, neither. He ain't got 'nuf feathers to fly over a rail, much less up in a tree." — I say he mus' clam' tree lak' I did. — I reached 'roun' an' got every kind o' rock but flint rock — But dem ole Plymouth Rock hens kind er rocks I'm talkin' 'bout — I got ever kind er eyes I seen but buckeye; an' reason I didn't git dat wus a cedar-tree — But Shanghai (eye) pullets kind o' eye I talkin' 'bout — I got ever kind o' freeze I seen but de weather, an' it wus hot when I went up dere. — But freezlin chicken what I'm talkin' about. — An' I got ever kind o' leg I seen but de thousand leg, an' dey tells me dat's a worm, an' I didn't need him. — Boot-legged roosters dem's de kind o' legs I got. — My girl say, "You better make haste an' come down 'way from up'n dat tree." — I say, "Why?" — She say, "I'm gittin' oneasy down here." — I say, "'Bout what?" She say, "Somebody may come an' ketch you up dat tree: if they do, times sho' will be hard wid you." — I says, "Wait a minit! Here's sumpin'! I don't know whether it's a chicken or a bird. I say he mighty little, but he's got feathers on him. I ketchin' everything what's got feathers on it." — Come to find out, it wus little ole banter rooster. — I grabbed him, an' jobbed him into my sack. I says, "Look out, girl! Here dey comes!" She say, "Naw, don't throw them chickens down here! You may break or bruise or kill some uv them." She say, "How in de worl' you gwine git down dat tree wid all dem chickens?" — I wus settin' out on big lim': I goes out to de body of de tree. — Then I slap my sack in my mouth — you oughter seen me slidin' down dat tree — you oughter seen me slidin' down dat tree. — We struck right out thru'

the woods fer home. — I had chickens enuf to las' a whole week. — But let me tell you what a jet black gal will do, especially if she's cross-eyed, lak' mine. — When de chickens give out, de gal give out too. — She quit me nex' mornin'. — I got up, lookin' fer my gal: she's done gone. — Her name was Lulu, but we called her Cross-eyed Sally. — So I looked fer Lulu all that day, but could not find her nowhere. — So I found her de nex' evenin'. — You know I tole you she was so black till I could take a fire-coal an' make a white mark on her face. — She wus settin' up courtin' a great big nigger twice as black as she wus. — He look jes' precise lak' black calf lookin' thru crack of whitewashed fence. — Reason he look dat way was, he had on one o' dese deep turn-down collars; but when he put it on, he didn't turn it down, he turn it up — settin' 'way up to his years — look lak' hoss wid blin' bridle on. — So I goes in an' says, "Good-evenin', Lulu!" — She wouldn't say a word. — I says, "How are you, mister?" He wouldn't say a word, neither. — I goes out-doors an' gits me a brick. — "Say, how you do, mister?" He wouldn't say a word. — I drawed back wid my brick. — I knocked him in de head, an' 'bout dat time I thought I killed him dead. — I reach'd up an' got my hat an' hollered, "Good-by, Miss Lulu, I'm gone — I'm gone."

## II. WORK-SONGS

It has been observed that the negro sings on all occasions. This has been especially true of the laborer. The tendency of the negro workers to sing is well known; and it matters little what the work is, the negro will have a song which he may sing while working. Those who have ample opportunity for continued observation maintain that the negro is fast losing his cheerfulness and gayety, his love of song and practice of singing. They affirm that the laborers work in silence; and instead of singing as of yore, the negroes are becoming perhaps each year more morose. The solitary workman, too, sings less continually than in former days. Undoubtedly this is the prevailing tendency; but the negro still retains much of his disposition to sing while at work. Whoever has seen in the spring-time a score of negroes with hoes, chopping in the fields to a chant, making rhythm, motion, and clink of hoe harmonize; whoever has heard in the autumn a company of cotton-pickers singing the morning challenge to the day, and uniting in song and chorus at the setting of the sun and "weighing-time," — will not soon forget the scene. The negroes still work and sing. They sing while going to and coming from the fields, while driving their teams and performing their sundry tasks; and the ploughman has been known to repeat his song until his mule waited for the accustomed voice before swinging into the steady walk for the day. So in town and country, in the city and at the camps, every class of workers finds song a good supplement to work. The railroad and section gangs, the contractor's "hands," the mining groups and convict camps, — all re-echo with the sound of shovel, pick, and song. The more efficient the song-leader is, the better work will the company do: hence the singer

is valued as a good workman. As motion and music with the negro go hand in hand, so the motion of work calls forth the song; while the song, in turn, strengthens the movements of the workers. The roustabout is willing to do almost any kind of work of short duration: he is likely to sing through his work. With song and jest these laborers rush through great feats of labor, and enjoy it. Sometimes the singers seem to set the ship in motion by the rhythm of their work and song, — songs of the moment, perhaps. From the woman at the wash-tub to the leader of a group, from the child to the older darkies, song is a natural accompaniment to work.

The negro songs are, for the most part, easily suited to common work, and therefore the number of work-songs is not limited. The stateliness of the religious song assists the workman as it does the shouters in the church; the common secular songs are easily adapted to any occasion. Indeed, there is no song which the negro knows, that he may not sing at any time. However, as a rule, certain songs are judged to be more naturally suited for work-songs, and are so designated. They are thus sung more frequently as work-songs. Their rhythm and metre must be more regular; their words must be adapted to slow and successive motions of the body. The kind of song is often determined by the nature of the work and the number of workmen. Songs are improvised at will, under the influence of work. The themes vary with the thoughts of the workmen or with the suggestions of the occasion. In general, however, work-songs are not unlike the average negro song, and are taken at random from the experiences of every-day life. The negro sings his flowing consciousness into expression. Like the other songs, the work-songs give a keen insight into the negro's real self.

The songs that follow are typical work-songs and phrases; they show much of the quality of the negro's disposition while at work. Special features may be observed as the songs are given.

95. WELL, SHE ASK ME IN DE PARLOR

In the first song that follows, the theme is one of the lover. It is suited, in its technique, to pulling, striking, digging, or any work that calls for long and rhythmic movements of the body. Each line has its regular cæsural pause, at which a stroke is finished and signified by the undertone of the palatal "whuk." The pause in song and motion is well suited to visualization. The negro singer thus reviews the words just sung, and begins the next half-line. The scenes presented in the song are graphic in contrast to the burning sun or the drizzling rain in which the negro works. The girl and the parlor, the invitation inside, the cool fan, and the affection of the woman for the lover, are vividly portrayed. The dramatic touch in which the refusal

brings forth the despair of the "dark-eyed man" touches a characteristic chord; but, as usual, the negro comes out victorious without giving further details. Happily works the dusky figure while he and his companions sing, —

Well, she ask me — *whuk* — in de parlör — *whuk*,  
 An' she cooled me — *whuk* — wid her fan — *whuk*,  
 An' she whispered — *whuk* — to her mother — *whuk*,  
 "Mamma, I love that — *whuk* — dark-eyed man — *whuk*."  
 Well, I ask her — *whuk* — mother for her — *whuk*,  
 An' she said she — *whuk* — was too young — *whuk*.  
 Lord, I wish'd I — *whuk* — never had seen her, — *whuk*, —  
 An' I wish'd she — *whuk* — never been bohn — *whuk*.  
 Well, I led her — *whuk* — to the altär — *whuk*,  
 An' de preacher — *whuk* — give his comman' — *whuk*,  
 An' she swore by — *whuk* — God that made her — *whuk*  
 That she never — *whuk* — love 'nuther man — *whuk*.

The rhythm of the workers may easily be seen from the metrical scheme of the lines. The cæsural pause is long enough for the laborer to begin a new stroke, and may well be represented by the triseme. Note, too, the freedom in the use of syllables and words in harmony with a single motion. The metre is a common one for the work-song.

$\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\wedge$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$   
 $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\wedge$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\smile$     $\frac{\_}{\_}$     $\wedge$

Sometimes the expression is varied from "whuk" to various kinds of grunts; sometimes the sound is inarticulate, while again it is only a breath.

#### 96. THE DAY I LEF' MY HOME

In the next song, "huh" is pronounced with a nasal twang, and has almost the sound of "huch." It serves its purpose, and is no more than the expression of the negro's surplus breath. Here the labor perhaps suggests the home and mother. A spider is seen; and the negro immediately puts it into his song, then goes back to his musings of the routine of his daily work. He finds some satisfaction in singing, —

The day I lef' — *huh* — my mother's hous' — *huh* —  
 Was the day I lef' — *huh* — my home — *huh*.  
 O bitin' spider, — *huh*, — don't bite me — *huh*!  
 O bitin' spider, — *huh*, — lawdy, don't bite me!

97. EARLY IN DE MORNIN'

The above verses, with their scansion, will show the general rhythm of the work-song. Further examples will be given in the discussion of the negro's mental imagery. In the following songs the reader may easily feel the rhythm that is adapted to work. The next song is that of one of the mining or railroad camp laborers. Sometimes the pause in the lines is one of silence, and the thought works out the rhythm.

- | : Early in de mornin', — honey, I'm goin' rise, : |  
 Yes; early in de mornin', — honey, I'm goin' rise,  
 Goin' have pick an' shovel — right by my side.
- | : Goin' take my pick an' shoyel — goin' deep down in mine, : | (*three times*)  
 I'm goin' where de sun — don't never shine.
- | : Well, I woke up this mornin' — couldn't keep from cryin', : | (*three times*)  
 For thinkin' about — that babe o' mine.
- | : Well, I woke up this mornin' — grindin' on my mind, : | (*three times*)  
 Goin' to grind, honey, — if I go stone-blind.

98. GRADE-SONG

The "Grade-Song" is one of the most typical of all negro songs. Here may be seen the humor and wit of the negro workman, and his relation to the "boss." In this song he epitomizes the events of the camp and of the day. It breathes the recklessness of the wanton workmen, and shows much of the trend of common thought. It gives the attitude of the negro, and the reply of the "captain," as they are conceived by the workman. No better picture of the negro workman can be found than that which is reflected in the verses that follow. Picture him as he works, talks, and sings, —

Well, I tole my captain my feet wus cold,  
 "Po' water on fire, let wheelers roll!"

Told my captain my han's wus cold.  
 "God damn yo' hans, let the wheelers roll!"

"Well, captain, captain, you mus' be blin';  
 Look at yo' watch! See ain't it quittin' time?

"Well, captain, captain, how can it be?  
 Whistles keep a-blowin', you keep a-workin' me.

"Well, captain, captain, you mus' be blin';  
 Keep a-hollerin' at me, skinnern damn nigh flyin'.

"Well, I hear mighty rumblin' at water-trough;  
 Well, it mus' be my captain an' water boss."

Well, de captain an' walker raise Cain all day;  
 Well, captain take a stick, run walker away.

"Wasn't dat ter'ble time" — so dey all did say —  
 "When cap'n take hick'ry stick an' run walker away?"



Well, I hear mighty rumblin' up in de sky,  
Mus' be my Lord go passin' by.

Well, dey makin' dem wheelers on de Western plan,  
Dey mos' too heavy for light-weight man.

"Skinner, skinner, you know yo' rule,  
Den go to de stable an' curry yo' mule.

"Well, curry yo' mule an' rub yo' hoss,  
An' leave yo' trouble wid de stable boss."

Well, if I had my weight in gold,  
I'd have the wimmin under my control.

Well, if I had my weight in lime,  
I'd whip my captain till I went stone-blind.

"Well, cap'n, cap'n, didn't you say  
You wouldn't work me in rain all day?

"Well, you can't do me like you do po' Shine,  
You take Shine's money, but you can't take mine."

Well, de boats up de river an' dey won't come down,  
Well, I believe, on my soul, dat dey's water-boun'.

Well, pay-day come, and dey done paid off,  
I got mo' money dan de walkin' boss.

Well, I got upon level, look as far's I could see,  
Nuthin' wus a-comin' but a big captain.

Well, I went to my dinner at twelve o'clock,  
I looked on table : "forty-fo's" was out.

Get up in mornin' when ding-dong rings,  
Look at table — see same damn things.

Oh, Captain Redman, he's mighty damn mean,  
I think he come from New Orleans.

The negro's attitude toward his "captain" is especially distinct. The song represents the kind of conversation the negroes have at the white man's expense. What does it matter to the "boss" if hands and feet are cold, or if the laborers must work in the rain all day? "On with the work!" is the only reply that the negro claims is given him. More than anything, the laborer is loath to work a single moment over-time. He waits for the minute, and stops in the midst of his work, if he be free to do so. If he is restrained, his frown and restlessness show what he is thinking about. Sometimes he works in silence, then bursts out —

"You hurt my feelin's, but I won't let on"—

then back to silence, resenting the fact that he is worked beyond the time when whistles blow. Perhaps then he thinks that he would like

to "whip his captain till he goes stone-blind." It is then that he thinks the captain is a "mighty damn mean" man. But the negro also thinks his captain has great powers, and often boasts of him to other workmen. So in this case his captain gets the better of the fight, and runs the "walker" away; but, according to the negro's conception of things, it must have been a great fight. However, the general tone of the song is one of complaint. The negro is complaining of his victuals, and shows at the same time his humor. By "forty-fours" he means peas. Even the common old stand-by has been left off the table. The combination of scenes with the characteristic imagery make an unusually typical song.

99. LAWDY, LAWDY, LAWDY!

The reckless disposition of the railroad-man is again reflected in the favorite song of the gang, —

| : Me'n my pahdner an' two'r three mo', : | (*three times*)  
 Goin' raise hell 'round pay-cah do' — pay-cah do',  
 Goin' ter raise hell 'round pay-cah do',  
*Lawdy, lawdy, lawdy!*

It is an interesting spectacle to watch a score of negro laborers file into the pay-car to receive their pay. The listless manner in which they wait in their eagerness, the peculiar expression on each man's face as he enters and as he returns, the putting of the money into his pockets and the plans for spending it,—these are all reflected in the typical scene. In the verse just given, the negro is represented as being impatient, and threatens to do violence to the paymaster; or he is boisterous with the knowledge that he will soon have money, and "raises hell" among his fellows while the crowd waits. Such a scene is a common one, although most of the rowdiness is "fun." They jeer one another and ridicule each man's paltry wage; they boast of how much money they will have, and what they will do with it; but when the money is received, there is almost universal silence. Why does the negro remain in silence after receiving his wages?

100. BABY'S IN MEMPHIS

But now he goes back to work, and sings, —

| : Baby's in Memphis layin' 'round, : | (*three times*)  
 Waitin' for de dollah I done found, I done found,  
 Waitin' for de dollah I done found.

And she gets the "happy dollar." The negro says that the "reason why" the woman's face is on the dollar is because she always gets it away from the man. Such is undoubtedly the case with the negro: not only does she get her allowance, but often deprives the poor work-

man of his own necessities. Still he maintains that there is a limit, and sings again, —

I pawn my watch, an' I pawn my chain,  
Well, I pawn my watch, an' I pawn my chain,  
I pawn my watch, an' I pawn my chain,  
An' I pawn ev'ything but my gold diamon' ring, gol' diamon' ring,  
An' I ain't goin' to pawn it, my baby, my baby!

#### 101. RAILROAD GANG SONG

Note the suggestiveness in the following stanza. The singer prides himself on being a "bad man," and intends that "a hint to the wise" should be understood as he tells of his former partner. The "sprawlin' man" and the grave are suggestive of the common experiences which may arise among the workmen. He sings,—

"Don't you remember one mornin'  
In June, 'bout eight o'clock,  
My pahdner fell sprawlin'?  
Dey carried him to his grave —  
I ain't goin' to say how he died."

#### 102. JA-GOOZE

The negro's fondness for the railroad has been noted. Some of the songs thus originating were given, many of which are sung as railroad work-songs. "Ridin' the rods" is a heroic deed, and the work of the railroad stands out always as a permanent field of labor for the negro. "Only road wus de road of all, On dat road was a cannon-ball," sings the workman about some train, either imaginary or real, then continues, —

"Ja-gooze said a befo' he died,  
Two mo' roads he wanter ride;  
Ef dere's nuthin' else, goin' to ride de rod,  
Goin' to leave all de coppers in de hands o' God."

"Under the Rail" expresses the sentiment of the worker, at the same time that it makes a rhythmical work-song. "Lawdy, lawdy, lawd!" sings the section-hand.

Under the rail, under the tie,  
Under the rail, under the tie,  
Under the rail, under the tie, — whar' yo' dollah lie,  
Whar' yo' dollah lie, whar' yo' dollah lie.

#### 103. HO-HO

Often the work-song is little more than a collection and combination of words and phrases for regular rhythm. A single reference will likely constitute each stanza. Dinner and quitting-time, coming and

going, and the work of the moment, are the thoughts of the following song. In this case the pause is toward the end of the line, and of longer duration. It may be filled with a word or exclamation, but ordinarily is indicated by the closing of the lips only.

Ain't it dinner — ho, ho?  
 Ain't it dinner — tell me so?  
 Goin' to leave you! Let's go!  
 Won't you tell me? Why so?  
 If I leave you — ho, ho!  
 Please don't leave me! Why so?  
 Well, let's go! I'm right.  
 Well, let's go! I'm right.  
 Good-by! I'm gone,  
 Good-by! I'm gone.  
 To the bottom, ho, ho!  
 To the bottom, ho, ho!

104. BABY MINE

Dealing with much the same themes, the next song shows a variation in form. Instead of the usual two parts of the line with successive repetitions, there are three, in which the third part almost equals in time the full length of the other two. The designations "baby," "woman," "gal," "girl," are but the ordinary names used in songs and conversation. He sings to his "baby," —

If I had it, you could git it,  
 Baby mine.  
 I ain't got it, an' you can't git it.  
 Woman o' mine.  
 Lord, Im goin' away to leave,  
 Gal o' mine.  
 If you mus' go'n leave me, don't go now,  
 My man.  
 Well, I goin' cross the water, to my long happy home,  
 Poor girl!  
 I ain't got no money, but will have some,  
 Pay-day.

105. RAISE THE IRON

The foreman of the gang cries out, " Can't you line 'em a little bit? " and the leader replies in the affirmative. He then sets the standard, and they all pull together for the desired work. The formula is a good one.

Brother Rabbit, Brother Bear,  
 Can't you line them just a hair?  
 | : Shake the iron, um-uh! : |  
 | : Down the railroad, um-uh! : |  
 | : Get the iron, let go! : |  
 | : Well, is you got it, um-uh! : |  
 Well, raise the iron, um-uh!  
 Raise the iron, um-uh!  
 | : Throw the iron, um-uh! : |  
 | : Throw the iron — throw it away! : |

## 106. PICK-AND-SHOVEL SONG

The "Pick-and-Shovel Song" that follows combines many of the features of those already given, and shows the repetition of form and matter that is so common in all negro songs. "Holding his head," "going crazy," "killing him dead," "licker," and the "bar-room," are common themes.

Run here, mamma! Run here, mamma!  
 Run here an' hold my head, O Lord!  
 Run here an' hold my head!  
 This ole hammer, this ole hammer,  
 Lord, it's 'bout to kill me dead, O Lord!  
 Lord, it's 'bout to kill me dead.  
 I'm goin' crazy, I'm goin' crazy,  
 Well, corn whiskey gone an' kill me dead, O Lord!  
 Corn whiskey gone an' kill me dead  
 O Lord Captain, O Lord Captain!  
 I don't know what to do, O Lord!  
 I don't know what to do.  
 O Lord Captain, O Lord Captain!  
 Well, it's captain, didn't you say, O Lord,  
 You wouldn't work me in the rain all day?  
 Honey baby, honey baby,  
 Honey, don't let the bar-room close, O Lord!  
 Honey, don't let the bar-room close!  
 Honey mine, honey mine,  
 If de licker's all gone, let me know, O Lord!  
 If de licker's all gone, let me know.  
 My honey babe, my honey babe,  
 If you have any good things, save me some, O Lord!  
 If you have any good things, save me some.

## 107. WORKMEN'S SONG

There are many short songs which the workmen employ. Sometimes they are stanzas from other songs. All of the "one-verse"

songs are usually adapted to work-song phrases. It is here that full opportunity is given for singing a great number of songs. Fragments of song are easily recalled, and sung again to new circumstances or to the regular kind of work. Most of the rhymes thus sung have their indecent counterpart, and both versions are often sung. Some of the fragments follow.

Sister Mary, aunt Jane,  
Whyn't you come along? Ain't it a shame?  
Rabbit on de main line, Coon turn de switches,  
Bull-frog jump from bank to bank.  
Look out! You tear yo' britches!  
If Johnnie wus a tumble-bug an' John wus his brother,  
Wouldn't they have a jolly time a-tumblin' together?  
That's my brown-skin papa, better leave him alone,  
Because I'll kill you befo' day in the morn.  
You cause me to weep, you cause me to mourn,  
You cause me to leave my happy home.  
I lef' my home one cold an' rainy day,  
God knows if I ever git back again!  
I loved the men befo' my man died,  
Lord, I loved the men befo' my man died.  
The day I lef' my mother's house  
Is the day I lef' my home.

## 108. FRANK AND JESSE JAMES

In the same way that the promiscuous songs are most easily renewed through the hours of work, so every kind of possible song is heard here. The mongrel productions arising from the mingling of negro song with "coon" songs and with popular songs of the whites, both assist in passing the time and in harmonizing work and movement. Typical stanzas may illustrate.

O mother! I'm dreaming, O mother! I'm dreaming,  
O mother! I'm dreaming 'bout Frank and Jesse James.  
Jesse James had a wife, she mourned all her life,  
Jesse James' children cried for bread.  
Went up on the wall, thought I heard a call,  
Thought I heard a call 'bout Frank an' Jesse James.

## 109. SATISFIED

Likewise here are found many of the most jingling rhymes, the origin and purity of which are uncertain quantities. They, too, are distinct in their quality, because of their present adaptation. The following jingle describes one of the workmen's idea of his own condition.

Rich folks worries 'bout trouble,  
 Po' folks worry 'bout wealth;  
 I don't worry 'bout nuthin',  
 All I want's my health.

Six long months have passed,  
 Since I have slept in bed;  
 I ain't eat a square meal o' vittles in three long weeks,  
 Money thinks I'm dead.

*But I'm satisfied,  
 Oh, yes! I'm satisfied.*

If religion was a thing that people had to buy,  
 The Jews would live, an' the Irishman would die,  
*But I'm satisfied,  
 Oh, yes! I'm satisfied.*

Some one stole a chicken in our neighborhood,  
 They 'rested me on suspicion, it was understood,  
 They carried me 'fo' de jury. — How guilty I did flee,  
 'Cause my name wus signed at de head! — De jury said was me.

#### 110. "FILL-IN" SONG

Watch the lonely singer plodding along and singing. Does his song mean anything more to him than the expression of a passing feeling in harmony with his work?

I thought I had a friend was true,  
 Done found out friends won't do;  
 It seems to me so awful shame,  
 You git confuse over such small things.

And again, does his thought exist in his work-song as it does in his singing when unrestrained?

There's a girl I love, she don't pay me no mind,  
 There's a girl I love, one I bears in mind,  
 She's a merry girl, but I love her jus' the same.

#### 111. "AIN'T GOIN' BE NO RINE"

The popular "Ain't goin' be no Rine" fills an appropriate place in the work-song. The theme is exactly suited to the sulky mood of a young negro laborer, and he sings,—

"If you don't like the way I work, jus' pay me off;  
 I want to speak one luv'in' word before I go;  
 I know you think I'm pow'ful easy, but I ain't sof',  
 I can git another job an' be my boss.

For they ain't goin' to be no rine,  
 I'll talk bizness to you some other time,  
 Watermelon good an' sweet,  
 Seed's only thing I don't eat,  
 You can judge from that ain't goin' to be no rine.

112. IT'S MOVIN' DAY

So, too, many mixed verses make good at any time when there is a dearth of material for song.

"I'm goin live in hell till I die,  
An' I know you goin' talk 'bout me when I'm gone,  
Sticks and stones goin' break my bone,"

is as much of the old song as the workman needs: so it becomes his work-song of the moment. So it is in others.

It breaks my heart to see my baby part,  
And then be left behind,  
And then be left alone. By-by, my baby! By-by!

Pack up my trunk, pack up my trunk an' steal away,  
Pack up your trunk, pack up your trunk an' steal away,  
Oh, it's me an' my darlin' goin' steal away from home.

It's movin' day, it's movin' day,  
I'm a natchel-bohn git away,  
I spin ev'y cent — go camp in a tent,  
Lord, it's movin' day!

Well, I jus' can't help from lovin' that baby o' mine,  
I'm crazy 'bout that brown-skin baby o' mine.

I got no use for sleep, I ain't got no use for sleep,  
I hate to feel it upon me creep;  
When I am sleepy, I goes to bed;  
When I am dead, be a long time dead.

In the foregoing examples of work-songs, the illustrations are secondary as work-songs. It may be repeated that any of these songs may be commonly sung at any time, but that they have special qualities which adapt them to the laborer's singing. The real work-song, and that from which many of the negro songs originally sprang, is the work-song phrase. The formulas by which they "pull together" are often simple expressions of word or phrase originated in communal work. The inventiveness of the negro working in concert with his fellows is unusually marked. Consequently there are an unlimited number of "heave-a-horas" in his song vocabulary. The "yo-ho" theory may well be applied to the origin of the work-song phrase. Each group of workmen has its leader: the signals are given by him, and the leading part is always sung by him. In the majority of the work-phrases he is the sole singer; he often resigns to another member of the group, or the several members are designated as leaders in a particular kind of work. A leader ordinarily has at his command several score of appropriate phrases. Not infrequently the act of the moment is put into sound and becomes the work-song; again the natural sound arising from the work may often become the rhythmic force.



## 113. GANG-SONGS

Before giving examples that are typical of the exclamations of song in general, the prevalent method may be illustrated by typical verses. The rhythm may be obtained from the scansion. A leader waits for the company to pull or push. He says, "Is you ready?" After a slight pause, a second man answers, "Ready!" and the leader continues, —

"Joe — pick 'em up — he — heavy, pick 'em up,  
Joe — he — heavy, pick 'em up,"

and so on until the work is finished. Again, he and his companions are expected to pull a large weight on the rope. They line up with hands holding, ready for the pull. The leader then says "Willie," and they pull out on the first part and on the second syllable get the new hold. The leader repeats "Willie" with the same process; he then finishes the rhythm for the hardest pull of the three with "Willie — bully — Willie," in which the double pull is given with one hold on the first "Willie," the new hold on the "bully," and the second pull on the last "Willie." The scheme is given. The leader then continues with as many of the periodic phrases as is necessary, using various names to suit his fancy.

Willie, Willie, Willie — bully — Willie.  
Mandy, Mandy, Mandy — bully — Mandy.  
Janie, Janie, Janie — bully — Janie.  
Haul it, haul it, haul it — bully — haul it.

Tear 'em up, tear 'em up, tear 'em up, — bully — tear 'em up.

Thus he sings "Susie," "Patty," "Lizzie," and other names which come to mind. Again, a very similar method, and one that may represent the general habit of using the shorter phrases, is the following. The work may be pulling, pushing, or lifting. The first half of the line serves to give the signal and impetus to the pull; the second is the return stroke.

Won't you pick 'em up — in heaven?  
Won't you haul 'em — in heaven?

## 114. HEAVE-A-HORAS

The shorter phrases are used in exactly the same way. They will be repeated more often. The tendency is to use the longer expressions when they are more suited to the task at hand, though long and short are freely interchanged. The negro easily makes a long one out of several short ones. One line may illustrate the time rhythm that is characteristic of them all. In general, the long foot or syllable

corresponds to a high note, and the short foot to a lower one. While they pull or work, the leader cries out —

“Come on, menses!”

And while the “menses” come, they work as a machine. The leader repeats this as often as he works, or until he likes another phrase better. As a rule, the leader will use a single phrase an average of ten or fifteen times before passing to another. The examples that follow will indicate the free range which they cover, and the ease with which the negro composes them. It will be seen that there are no strict essentials which must belong to the song: the fitting words may be the invention of the moment. The harmony of the group of negroes working on the bridge, the house, the railroad, or at the warehouse and in the mine, is typified by the union of the many simple work-song phrases. They may be studied for themselves. Each line constitutes an entire work-song phrase, complete in itself.

Hey — slip — slide him — a — slip-slide him.  
 Ev'rybody bow down an' put yo' han's to it.  
 Come an' go wid me — come an' go wid me.  
 Heavy — heavy — heavy — heavy — hank — back.  
 All right — all right.  
 Draw — back — adraw — back.  
 Tear 'em up-a-tear 'em up.  
 Come hard ag'in it-a.  
 Work hard again it so.  
 Break it, boys, break it.  
 Hike, hike, kike-back.  
 Come on here.  
 What's a matter? white-eyed.  
 What's a matter — fagged out?  
 What's a matter — monkey got you?  
 Haul it — haul it back.  
 Here — yeah — here, you.  
 Turn — turn it — turn her on.  
 Let's turn 'em over.  
 Turn it one mo' time.  
 How 'bout it?  
 Knock down on it.  
 Up high wid it, men.  
 Get up — get it up any way to git it up.  
 Yonder she go.  
 Put yo' nugs on it.  
 Lay yo' hands on it.  
 Put 'im up on it.  
 Get up, Mary, Janie, etc.  
 Hello — hello — hello!  
 Yang 'em — Yang 'em. (Go 'round an' pick 'em up.)

Hy, Captain, too heavy here.  
 Hold it, boys, till I come.  
 Now, let's go, bullies.  
 Hold — hold — hold.  
 Once — more — boys.  
 Little — lower — down.  
 'Way — up — 'way — up.  
 Go ahead — go ahead.  
 H-ey — h-e-y — h-e-y.  
 Draw — back — on it.  
 Do — fare — you — well.  
 Here — you — tight — white — eye.  
 Jump — up — jump — now.  
 Get — up — dere — last — down.  
 Ev'y — quack — d-o-w-n.  
 Bow — down — back — up — back — off.  
 Whack — man — a-l-l.  
 P-r-i-z-e — e-m.  
 Hit — 'em — hit — 'em — 'high.  
 Whoa — Reuben.  
 Whoa — lead — pull 'em — a-little — over — there.  
 Git back on de right side now.  
 Drive — drive — drive.  
 Pull 'em over jus' a hair.  
 Jack 'em up men.  
 Lawd, it don't take nuthin' but a red-eyed man to make it here.

#### 115. H-O-L-D SONGS

Many of these exclamations in time become connected, and make more distinct songs. The songs that are given in couplets are of this type. Each couplet represents, as a rule, four parts; each line, two divisions; each division constituted a single phrase like those just given. The process is a natural one. The technique is often not so clearly noticeable as in the following railroad phrase:

Ole aunt Dinah has a garden —  
 On one side is sweet pertaters —  
 On other side good ripe permaters,  
 H-o-l-d — h-o-l-d!

A single glance, however, shows that each line is naturally divided into two periods, each of which makes an effective work-phrase. So in the following:

H-i-g-h-t, red bird flyin' 'round here,  
 Monkey sho' gwine git somebody,  
 See 'im wid his tail turned up.  
 I broke down on de beam so long,  
 Till I done lost de use o' my right arm.

Come on, menses, let's pick up the iron,  
Ain't it heavy all de time?

Up to my lips, down let her slips,  
Where many quarts an' gallons go.

In the same way each particular kind of work may suggest a special form of the phrase or verse. The negroes loading the vessels, as they rush past each other with the freight and jeer at each other, sing "Git out of de way dere!" "Git 'cross de way!" "Git to yo' place!" "Talk to me-e!" "Oh, yes! time ain't long," "O-h-h cross over, young man!" "O-O me-babe!" and other exclamations differing only slightly from the common laborers' phrases. The negro specializes his songs whenever he desires. Their flexibility and his imagery and taste are not discordant. Song is conducive to good humor, and good humor brings better work. Both the direct and indirect effect of singing upon the worker make it advisable that his song continue as long as he works.

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## LOCALITIES FROM WHICH SONGS WERE COLLECTED

## I. NORTHERN MISSISSIPPI, Lafayette County.

- (a) Collected from resident singers: Nos. 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 31, 33, 35, 40, 46, 55, 56, 57, 62, 73, 74, 79, 89, 91, 108.
- (b) Collected from visiting singers: Nos. 1, 8, 12, 13, 22, 23, 24, 32, 34, 50, 53, 54, 60, 63, 65, 75, 76, 77, 78, 89, 110.

## II. NORTHERN GEORGIA, Newton County.

- (a) Collected from resident singers: Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 18, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 36, 37, 38, 39, 45, 47, 48, 49, 58, 61, 68, 69, 70, 71, 81, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 92, 95, 96, 97, 98, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 109, 111.
- (b) Collected from visiting singers: Nos. 9, 10, 19, 28, 41, 42, 43, 44, 51, 52, 59, 66, 67, 72, 80, 82, 83, 88, 89, 90, 94.

## III. RAILROAD "GANGS" ON ILLINOIS CENTRAL RAILROAD IN NORTHERN MISSISSIPPI: Nos. 99, 100, 101, 102, 113, 114, 115.

## IV. MISCELLANEOUS.

- (a) Reported from Chapel Hill, N. C., No. 64.
- (b) Reported from Southern Mississippi (Biloxi), No. 93.